THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Government of West Bengal have informed that they are aware of the illegal felling of trees and forcible occupation of land in forest area in Darjeeling hill areas since the period of G.N.L.F. movement. To check the menace of illegal felling of trees, special raids both by forest and police departments are organised from time to time. In cases of forcible occupation of land forest officers take the help of the other district authorities to counter the menace.

Priorities of Government regarding eradication of illiteracy

840. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what priorities are proposed to be fixed up by Government to eradicate illiteracy in the country;

(b) what is the percentage of budgetary allotment from total education budget, meant for the eradication of illiteracy; and

(c) what is the percentage of allotment of budget, from education budget meant for higher technical and scientific researches/education?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) Compulsory Universalisation of Elementary Education and eradication of illiteracy, mainly in 15—35 age-group, comprise the strategy for eradication of illiteracy in the country. Priorities include programme of non-formal education in 10 educationally backward States, and the National Literacy mission aimed at imparting functional literacy to 80.00 million adult illiterates in the 15—35 age-group by 1995.

(b) The allocation for programmes relating to eradication of illiteracy is 48.26 per cent of the total Plan education budget for 1989-90 (Central and State sector taken together).

(c) The allocation for technical education including scientific research/education is 13.53 per cent of the total education budget (Plan) for 1989-90 (Central and State sector taken together).

Allotment of Forest Land for Sabarimala Temple in Kerala

841. SHRI THOMAS KUTHIRAVATTOM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request for allotting forest land to Sabarimala temple in Kerala is pending with Government; and

(b) if so, what is Government's guidelines regarding allotment of forest land for temples and other religious uses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Clearance of hydro electric project of Kerala

842. SHRI THOMAS KUTHIRAVATTOM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kuriarkutty hydro electric project of Kerala has been

cleared by the Ministry of Environment & Forests;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Kuriarkutty hydro-electric project, as proposed in 1979, was rejected due to its adverse impact on wet evergreen forests in Western Ghats. The resultant reservoir was also expected to affect the Anamalai Game Sanctuary.

Visits of high powered official team to Switzerland

@843. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of high powered official teams visited Switzerland during the past three years to investigate into US $ 40 million paid by Bofors as kickbacks;

(b) whether any of these teams had discussions with representatives and officials of the Swiss Division of International Assistance and Police Matters, Swiss National Bank and the Swiss Federal Banking Commission; and

(c) what are the conclusions drawn by Government on the reports and discussions these teams had in Switzerland?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) Investigating officials have visited Switzerland to enquire into this case on several occasions.

(b) Some of these teams had discussions with the officers of the Federal Department of Justice and Police of the Government of Switzerland and certain Swiss Banks.

(c) No definite conclusions can be drawn till the investigations have been completed.

Raising to age limt of women to join Government Services

844. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to raise the age limit for women to join Government service to help them achieve economic independence; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposal and how soon it would be implemented?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Setting up of National Commission on Women

845. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a National Commission on women is going to be set up shortly to oversee the whole gamut of legislative, executive and social action with regard to women's issues; and

(b) if so, the terms of reference thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF

@Previously Unstarred Question 309, transferred from the 15th March, 1990.